

26.

Opposites

Attract

OBJECTIVE: Participants understand how different family members tend to “balance” each other with regard to money roles.

TIME: 15 minutes

TALKING POINTS:

In many aspects of relationships, partners often learn to balance each other. This is also true when it comes to our money roles and how we deal with money in a family. One partner may consciously or unconsciously start to balance the attitude in the other partner; they may act as opposites. For example, in many relationships, when it comes to money:

- One person is the spender and the other the saver;
- One person is usually the worrier and the other avoids thinking about money; and
- One person is more of a planner and the other, the dreamer or visionary.

Discuss the different money personalities:

Hoarder v. Spender

Amasser v. Money Monk

Worrier v. Avoider

Interestingly, our money personality or the role we play can change depending on who we are relating to. For instance, maybe at work your boss is a big spender, always coming up with expensive marketing ideas. You may find that you are often encouraging her to find less costly alternatives. On the other hand, your marriage partner may be a hoarder, never wanting to spend money on things your family wants. At home, you may take on the role of a spender.

ACTIVITY:

Choose a money personality duo that appears to be most salient for the class to use. Divide the people in the room in half. You can do this by counting “one...two...one...two” or by simply finding a dividing line. Either way, don’t pick groups based on actual roles in the family. Assign each group one side of the grouping. Invite the first group, i.e., the Worriers, to spend a few minutes shouting out any judgments or criticisms they have of Avoiders. Comments may include statements like: “You never deal with money,” or “You bounced three checks last week because you have no idea how much money is in the bank account.” Now invite the Avoiders to judge and/or criticize the Worriers on the other side of the room. After both groups have

Adapted, with permission, from an activity by Olivia Mellan published in her book Money Harmony.

done this, invite everyone to take a deep breath and shake out the tension in their limbs.

Now, invite the first group to tell the other group what they secretly admire about them and their way of dealing with money. After a few minutes, when the group's comments are winding down, invite the second group to share all their secret envies and appreciations of the contrasting group's money style.

You will be able to feel a big shift in the energy in the room, from antagonistic to soft, vulnerable, and respectful. This kind of sharing between couples—understanding and appreciating each other in a good way—helps when money differences arise.